

# Watchers in the Bog (S3, E29)

**SFX:** INTRO MUSIC

**Rev:** Boy, last week we talked about the idea of everyone strapping on GoPros and Jake hunting us, and we sure got a resounding "yes, please" from the audience.

**Jake:** Yeah.

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** And I appreciate it.

**Rev:** Yeah. So I suppose when the world allows it, well, we just might have to make this happened. So Tass, I think your job here is to come up with some real life like measurements for are we succeeding in Dead by Daylight-esque tasks.

**Tass:** Oh, on it.

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Tass:** Yep, OK. OK.

**Megan:** Now I'm wondering, here. Are we going to like mix Dead by Daylight and actual dodgeball in the sense of like oh there's a boundary he can't like — he can't just like step out in front of us and hit is point blank in the face of the dodgeball, I would hope. But ...

**Jake:** I don't see why not. I think you're putting needless limitations on this.

**Tass:** Yeah. I mean, if he's gotten close enough to beam you point blank with a dodgeball, you deserve it.

**Jake:** You've made a lot of errors on the way there.

**Tass:** Yeah.

**Jake:** [laughs]

**Rev:** Because I think the nice thing is that if it's like generators and trees and stuff, it would actually give us cover, if you see him coming. But I like the idea of there being tasks that we can accomplish that like, oh, this signals we have won this round.

**Tass:** And I even have no fewer than two different out in the woods locations that I could definitely get for us.

**Jake:** I want to do one in an urban setting, somehow. I want to find like an abandoned building to run at least one of these rounds in.

**Tass:** All right.

**Jake:** This seems like it could be as easy as like a capture the flag scenario. Like, you know, not having to actually fix generators or do tasks, but find things and return them.

**Rev:** Mmm.

**Tass:** Yeah, I'm on this. The ideas are flowing. I'm ready. We got it.

**Rev:** The hardest part will just be editing together the footage in a comprehensive way.

**Megan:** I can handle that.

**Jake:** This is going to be like Blair Witch Project.

**Megan:** Yeah.

**Jake:** Like this is going to be your fucking ... Your opus.

**All:** [laugh]

**Rev:** So with the idea of the ... At this point, it would be the viewing audience, watching from your point of view. What is the thing that unsettles you the most about them

discovering about you? Like the thing for me is that people will discover just how much I talk to myself in mutters.

**All:** [laugh]

**Megan:** I think mine is how out of shape I am. It's just gonna be a lot of heavy breathing.  
[laughs]

**Tass:** I'm not self-conscious at all about anything, literally ever.

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Megan:** I think mine would be kind of boring to watch. Just because, like, I mean, I played dodgeball in school and I was not very good at throwing things, but the actual dodging part, I was pretty good. I played HvZ in college, which is Humans vs. Zombies. So it's ... People who are zombies have to tag you and you as a human have Nerf guns, so you can use the Nerf guns with the darts or socks balled up. It's basically dodgeball. And if you hit them, you stun them. And I was pretty good at dodging all of that, too. [laughs] But I was pretty good at finding somewhere to hide and waiting for the opportune moment to, like, run out and do the thing that I had to do really quick.

**Rev:** I see. I see.

**Tass:** Yeah. I am suddenly very nervous about this. I'm going to have to go full on hide-and-seek tactics because if it comes to a foot chase, I'm done. I'm done so fast.

**Jake:** It also just occurred to me that if we're doing like Dead by Daylight mimicry that we could mimic different hunters. Like in one game I have dodgeballs, in another game I've got a foam stick. Like, you know, how much do I have to close range and stuff? And I assume I'm not — I don't have a camera on, right? I'm the threat, here. Like, I have to just come in from out of frame on somebody else's camera.

**Tass:** I think we camera you up anyway, and it's very choice when we actually put those moments in.

**Jake:** OK. Or like ... [laughs] Like I just — somebody turns their head and I'm there, and like that feed cuts and then it rolls back like thirty seconds to me stalking, so you see my perspective on the approach.

**Megan:** I like the idea of having you up the whole time and then, like, being able to see things simultaneously. So that the audience starts to put together the scenery in one shot and the scenery in the other.

**Jake:** That graffiti looks familiar. Oh no!

**Megan:** It's like watching a horror movie, and like the killer is like walking up behind somebody as they're unsuspecting. And you're just like — you want to reach out and yell, look behind you!

**Rev:** Yeah. Or like those moments where you see from Megan's point of view that she's watching Jake walk around the corner. And in the corner, that Jake doesn't see Megan, but the corner of the camera sees Megan. And so the audience gets to see, like ...

**Tass:** Just for one match, I request that Jake and I are a tag team and we play The Twins from Dead by Daylight, and I'll be the baby that he throws.

**All:** [laugh]

**Megan:** That he throws at us?

**Tass:** Yeah.

**Jake:** Or we play the twins from Twins, the Schwarzenegger - DeNiro vehicle.

**Tass:** Sweet.

**Megan:** But who's who?

**Jake:** I'm DeNiro, come on.

**Megan:** Come on.

**Jake:** Come on, son. [laughs] DeNiro — DeVito!

**Tass:** I guess I'll be Pacino in this.

**Megan:** [laughs]

**Jake:** Dodgeball! Hooah!

**Rev:** Now my mind is suddenly turning towards the direction of like, OK, everybody pick a killer to mimic.

**Tass:** Oh ...

**Rev:** So then it's like, what is your particular strength that you would bring if you were the one hunting everyone else, and you had to have like the fake weapon.

**Tass:** I love it.

**Megan:** You've all played Dead by Daylight with me. I'm not good at any of it. [laughs]

**Rev:** So, yeah. Eventually. Yeah, this is gonna happen.

**Megan:** This has to happen.

**Jake:** What's it take to get permits in like Chernobyl? Like let's just go.

**Megan:** I love you all. Not radiation-level love, though.

**Jake:** Just don't touch anything.

**Rev:** Then you and Tass will end up like The Twins from Dead by Daylight.

**All:** [laugh]

**Rev:** Speaking of things that are inevitable ...

**All:** [laugh]

**Rev:** If you head over to our Reddit, right now Andrew, one of our mods, is running an Artpocalypse contest, and the art subject for this month is Jingles. So head over to Reddit and submit your best fan art of Jingles, and then they will have some voting set up, and he has got some prizes that he will give out to the winner. And I will say, actually, last time we did one of these, we ended up purchasing the rights for the art from the artist to use on a T-shirt, because we are always on the lookout for stuff for the swag store, so. Head over to reddit.com, uh ... I'll have to remember how to say one of those links.

**Jake:** /r/thecritshow?

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** Podcast? Not podcast.

**Megan:** It's just r/thecritshow.

**Jake:** Just r/thecritshow.

**Rev:** Yeah. And enter the Jingles Artpocalypse contest. And then lastly, we mentioned before that we are setting up to do a weekly game on our Twitch. We've got, from the time we were recording this, about six days left that we are still taking submissions for GMs. So if you are interested in that, you can head over to [thecritshowpodcast.com/twitch-gm](http://thecritshowpodcast.com/twitch-gm) to get all the information, and to submit if you are interested in being considered for running a game on our Twitch.

I think with that, it's time to get to the episode.

**SFX:** CRITSHOW STINGER

**Rev:** Jake, here you are in Elnore. Ferguson has just told you that to complete the magic that you'd like to do, he needs you to go far from the castle here to a place where the sun does not touch, a place of death and decay, and retrieve a blue rose.

**Jake:** "Oh, beans. Is there an ... Is there are old crone lives around there?"

**Rev:** FERGUSON: There is certainly a guardian of that place. I have never encountered them. But some who have gone have not made it back.

**Jake:** "Oh dang. That sounds like Baba Yaga."

**Rev:** FERGUSON: I don't know what that is.

**Jake:** "Baba Yaga is a pan-dimensional crone with extraordinary abilities who can ... Not communicate, kind of perceive, whatever, all of her other versions. Some of them are cool, some of them are less cool. But the one in our world has made us hunt for a blue rose, so ..."

**Rev:** FERGUSON: Oh, I see. A universal constant.

**Jake:** "Yeah. A weirdly variable universal constant. She's always there, but she's always different."

**Rev:** FERGUSON: Hmm.

**Jake:** "This one sounds extra bad."

**Rev:** FERGUSON: Oh. Because of the whole bog of death and decay thing?

**Jake:** "Yeah. Yeah. Like the one in our world was kind of rough, but even she just kind of lived in the woods on her own. She did have metal teeth and she did like bite us and she did in prison Death — the god of."

**Rev:** FERGUSON: Hmm. Well, that actually sounds pretty nice.

**Jake:** "Well it didn't work." [laughs]

**Rev:** FERGUSON: Oh. Why not?

**Jake:** "I mean people still died for sure, if that's what you're thinking. She didn't, like, eliminate death. People definitely still died."

**Rev:** FERGUSON: Oh, I see.

**Jake:** "Yeah."

**Rev:** FERGUSON: Did it curb death at all? Or was it just ...

**Jake:** "I'd have to look up the statistics on after he got out."

**Rev:** FERGUSON: Are you sure this was Death?

**Jake:** "The god of death."

**Tass:** Assistant to.

**Jake:** "He's gone now, and people are definitely still dying. So. Well, who wants to come along, I guess. I don't really want to name a roster for this one. This one's gonna suck for sure. Anybody feelin' froggy?"

**Rev:** Both Ori and Fox say that they would go, but probably only one of them.

**Jake:** [laughs] Yeah, I was going to say ... Yeah, how about everybody?

**Rev:** Like sorry, man, you only got room in your party for one. The rest of us are grayed out as soon as you select another one.

**All:** [laugh]

**Rev:** It's like Ultimate Alliance. Just a huge roster of all the Elnore people. But as soon as you pick one, the rest of them gray out.

**Jake:** I go, 'All right, Ori.' And then everybody else just turns into like a silhouette and I'm like, 'What the fuck? Jesus.'



**Rev:** [chuckles]

**Jake:** "All right, Ori. You and me."

**Rev:** ORI: All right.

**Jake:** "Do I need a map or anything? Or do we know where we're going?"

**Rev:** FERGUSON: Yes, the way is known to us very well. I think Ori can certainly lead you in the proper direction. It is an area that we have marked off from our patrols. They do not go past that point. Ori, is that correct? Do you think you could lead him there?

**Rev:** And Ori nods. Once inside the bog, it will simply be a matter of finding where the blue rose blooms and returning one to us.

**Jake:** "All right. Ori, you ready to go?"

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah.

**Jake:** "Lead the way."

**Rev:** ORI: You want to, like ... Should I stay, like, human? You want to chat on the way? Or like do you want me to become a wolf and like scout ahead?

**Jake:** "Which option do you think is going to keep us alive the best?"

**Rev:** ORI: Oh, I mean up until we get to the bog, I think anything is OK. I haven't been into the bog, though. Like they said don't go in, so ...

**Jake:** "Well, yeah. Let's take the time to hang out on the way there, and then maybe you'll kind of wolf scout or something like that?"

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah.

**Jake:** "OK."

**Rev:** ORI: All right.

**Rev:** Is there anything you want to talk about with Ori on the way there?

**Jake:** I would probably just kind of walk him through all of the Yaga experience that we have already from other places on the way here, so that maybe he has any idea of what to prepare for?

**Rev:** ORI: So maybe like we'll, like, duel some knights?

**Jake:** "Yeah, we may very well duel some knights, in which case your archery skills are going to come in handy."

**Rev:** ORI: Nice.

**Jake:** "For sure. I don't know if we'll have to deal with the maze of tunnels. Because the maze of tunnels was mostly, I think, just to keep the one guy in, and that guy's not here."

**Rev:** ORI: Oh, OK. So Megan was taken by Estin. Is she like part of the team now? Did she, like, take my place?

**Jake:** [chuckles] "Yeah. I mean, yeah, she is part of the team now, but she kinda ... Kinda took TJ's place."

**Rev:** ORI: Well how come?

**Jake:** "TJ is not with us anymore. Koschei the Deathless, and sort of also Nash, killed him."

**Rev:** And Ori stops and just kind of looks at the ground for a second.

**Rev:** ORI: Miss a lot of stuff not being around, I guess.

**Jake:** "Yeah. I mean a lot has happened in the very recent past, so ..."

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah. I was noticing the new look. I wasn't quite sure how to bring it up. And the flames when you appear, and stuff.

**Jake:** "Yeah. I, um ... I reaffiliated. I mean I'm gonna be honest in this. I'm sure this won't surprise you, but losing TJ did some pretty bad stuff to me, and I think to the team as a whole. And I sort of made a warpath decision in the moment and, you know, it changed who gives me power. And that's the path I'm on now."

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah, I get it. Like being here now and having my sister free? Like I'm not learning all this stuff for fun. I'm learning all this stuff in case someone comes for her again.

**Jake:** "Well, we've promised ourselves that we're gonna be the ones to kill Nash. But I'm sure there's room for one more if you decide you want to be involved come time."

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah, you can definitely count me in on that.

**Rev:** And he looks up ahead.

**Rev:** ORI: Well, you wanna go pick some flowers?

**Jake:** "Yeah. Yeah, I'm sure this will be a nice diversion."

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah.

**Rev:** And he indicates up ahead, and what you see through the break in the trees fills your vision. It is an enormous weeping willow tree, about the same size as the tree that the court of Elnore keep their castle in. And the branches that hang down are plentiful and thick, and you can see that it makes a complete canopy that covers any light from getting in. And as you get closer, you can see that the grass coming out from underneath the branches of this weeping willow tree is black and decaying, and there's a foul stench on the wind. And about 100 yards away from it, Ori stops.

**Rev:** ORI: OK, this is like the boundary that they gave us. What do we do now?

**Jake:** "I mean, I think we keep going inside and then figure out what the hell's going on in there."

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah, it's kind of what I thought you were going to say.

**Jake:** "Should I have brought Fox instead?"

**Rev:** ORI: No, no. I mean, it's fine. It's just ... People are like, don't go in here. And then we get here and it's like, you can't even see anything. It's just, you know ... No, it's fine. I'll go.

**Jake:** [chuckles] I will pull out my sword and kind of lead the way in with it. Use it to part some of the branches and stuff so that we can get inside this canopy.

**Rev:** So as you and Ori pass underneath this canopy, there's a strange illumination. It's not completely dark in here, but you can see very subtle greens and blues, and it seems to be coming from different fungus and mushrooms. That smell has gotten even stronger, and maybe 10, 15 feet ahead, you can see that the ground starts to sink down and you can see the large roots of the tree, and there are pools of stagnant standing water everywhere.

**Jake:** "All right. You think any of your shapeshifting forms might help us track down a particular flower?"

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah. I mean, I could try to turn into a bat or something and fly around and see what there is to see.

**Jake:** "Yeah, go for it. Don't venture too far without me, though."

**Rev:** ORI: OK.

**Rev:** And he transforms into a bat and flies up. And as he starts to fly up, a bunch of the branches start to kind of move and shift his way.

**Jake:** Does he seem aware of that?

**Rev:** He does not.

**Jake:** OK. Then I'll be like, "Oh, Ori! Hey, come back."

**Rev:** And he loops around and comes back down towards you, and then transforms back into his human form.

**Jake:** Do those branches seem to, like, recede when he transforms back?

**Rev:** They seem to recede when he gets lower to the ground.

**Jake:** OK. "It seems like the higher up you get, the more the branches start to maybe like close in on you. It seems like maybe this whole place is kind of hunting for outsiders. So just be careful. Stay aware."

**Rev:** ORI: Oh, OK. Hmm ... I guess I could try to, like ... I'm really gonna be able to see very well unless I get high.

**Jake:** "Well don't worry about it, then. Because I don't want you to get snagged up by the tree. So let's just kind of move in here on foot and see what we can find." So I just want to start moving a little bit further in here and see if I can pick up a trail on anything. You know, last time it was like just in a pot in the tunnels. And it seems like it grows naturally here, or at least that's kind of how they made it sound. So I want to see if I can pick up any changes in foliage or vegetation or anything that I think could lead me to the blue rose.

**Rev:** And how are you moving through here? You know, it's big roots and there's clumps of mud and a lot of kind of standing water.

**Jake:** I want to try to stay dry. If I can, like, skip from, you know, root to root or anything like that to stay above the waterline, that's what I'd be going for. Is that possible at all?

**Rev:** Yeah, I think that's gonna be an Act Under Pressure.

**Jake:** OK.

**Rev:** Because you notice that as you start to move forward, the branches hang down closer to the roots, not as close to the water.

**Jake:** All right. Six.

**Rev:** All right. So you start to move across, and it's slippery. There is a lot of decaying material here. And you slip off of the root and fall into the water. I've got a new move for you to roll.

**Jake:** OK.

**Rev:** This is called Dark Delights and Violent Ends.

**Jake:** Oh, good.

**Rev:** So roll Cool.

**Jake:** Seven.

**Rev:** Who is someone that you consider an uneasy ally?

**Jake:** Strohm.

**Rev:** Maybe ten yards away in another pool of water, you see Strohm rise out of the water. And she points further in and she smiles, and then she gets low in the water and just starts wading around. Almost kind of like an alligator, like just her eyes are watching you still, from the surface of the water.

**Jake:** Very creepy. I can't believe this, but I think I just leveled up again.

**All:** [laugh]

**Rev:** What are you gonna take?

**Jake:** I'm going to take +1 to Cool. I think that like being in another Yaga Zone and doing a similar quest to something I've done and like immediately goofing up, that I have to

kind of like center myself and realize I've done this before, and I can keep my head in here, et cetera. And that translates to like a Cool boost.

**Rev:** OK. So yeah, a little further away in another of these pools of water, you see the top of Strohm's head, and her eyes just watching you from inside the murky water.

**Jake:** "Hey, Ori?"

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah.

**Jake:** "Do you see that?"

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah.

**Jake:** "Tight."

**Rev:** ORI: Do you know that person?

**Jake:** "Yeah."

**Rev:** ORI: Oh.

**Jake:** "We're all right, normally."

**Rev:** ORI: Why is she staring at you like that?

**Jake:** "I don't know. Do you — is it a real ... It's not real person you don't think, right? This is probably like a ..."

**Rev:** ORI: I don't know. You know her. I don't.

**Jake:** Like does it look just like a — like do I believe that this is the Strohm somehow here, or does this seem like it's probably some kind of mind trick? Or ...

**Rev:** I mean, I think that's open for interpretation. Like it looks like Strohm.

**Jake:** Fuck. All right. Well, I am going to go the direction she pointed and keep a cautious berth from her as I go by.

**Rev:** You start to proceed further in towards the trunk of this enormous weeping willow tree. And as you pass by her, she sinks down into the water. And maybe a minute later, you see her, up ahead, appear out of a different pool. Just the eyes in the top of the head again, watching.

**Jake:** This is literally nightmarish. I don't think she's real, but I'm still gonna ask. I'm gonna go, "Hey, Strohm. What's up?"

**Rev:** Her eyes blink, but not together.

**Jake:** [laughs]

**Tass:** [shudders]

**Megan:** I love this so much.

**Tass:** Thank you for this nightmare fuel. The Yaga Zone is like the Discovery Zone, but with more loose flesh.

**All:** [laugh]

**Jake:** I want to try to gingerly poke her with the sword, very slowly, so she has plenty of time to react.

**Rev:** Yeah. As the sword starts to get close to her, her hand darts out of the water and wraps around the blade and holds it.

**Jake:** I want to very gingerly try to withdraw the sword.

**Rev:** She does not let go. And you can tell where she's holding it, there is not fire.

**Jake:** I want to try to yank it away very hard.



**Rev:** Roll Act Under Pressure.

**Jake:** Thirteen.

**Rev:** You do. You pull this blade away and you see that all four of her fingers come off and fall into the water. And she brings the hand back down under the water, and you see the fingers start to move around and then duck under the water.

**Jake:** "Fuck this whole place so hard. Ori, we're going. We're moving. Let's keep going."

**Rev:** ORI: OK.

**Jake:** "Ignore her."

**Rev:** ORI: All right.

**Jake:** "Well, don't ignore her. Stay aware of her, but don't engage with her anymore."

**Rev:** ORI: OK.

**Megan:** I thought you said "we're going" like, nope, fuck this. We're done, we're leaving.

**Rev:** Jake just vanishes.

**Jake:** Quest ain't worth it.

**Rev:** So where are you going now? She has pointed you in a direction. She is not moving any further. Where are you headed?

**Jake:** I think towards the trunk.

**Rev:** How are you moving through the space? Are you trying to stay up on the root still? Are you just getting there by any means necessary?

**Jake:** I mean it sure seemed like last time I fell in the water, something bad happened. So, yeah, I think I'm probably still trying to stay on the roots. Can Ori help in any way?

Does he have any sort of shape change that would help him move through this and maybe that I could piggyback on or anything?

**Rev:** ORI: I could turn into smoke?

**Jake:** "Does that help me at all?"

**Rev:** ORI: No.

**Jake:** "Well, I mean, you might as well. I don't want you to also fall in the water and start triggering horrible nightmares."

**Rev:** ORI: OK.

**Rev:** And he does.

**Jake:** And I'll, yeah, I'll just keep trying to jump root to root.

**Rev:** All right. Roll Act Under Pressure.

**Jake:** Parkour! Ten.

**Rev:** As you get closer to the base of the tree, you can see that there are more and more pools, and you see a couple other figures moving around inside of these pools. They look like the people from Elnore. They look like people made out of bark and roots and vines, but their color is faded. And they don't seem to pay any attention to you, they're just moving through the water, sinking down, looking around.

**Jake:** Do they look like people I know?

**Rev:** They don't.

**Jake:** "Ori, do you recognize any of those folks?"

**Rev:** ORI: No. Nuh-uh.

**Jake:** "I wonder if these are the deceased."

**Rev:** ORI: Oh, like the people who came here and didn't get out? Or just like people who have died here in general?

**Jake:** "I don't know. I mean, it kind of looks like that whirlpool full of souls from the animated Hercules movie? So ..."

**Rev:** ORI: Oh.

**Jake:** "Right? They're all just kind of floating around there."

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah.

**Jake:** "Don't reach in, because I feel like one of them might try and grab us."

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah. Yeah.

**Jake:** I guess I'll try and move past it.

**Rev:** So as you go to move through here, the branches of the weeping willow are starting to hang down further and further. But you can see up ahead, in the trunk of the tree, is a pretty large opening that is covered by vines.

**Jake:** "All right. It seems like the way in is up there. I'm guessing that's where we need to go, so I'm gonna try and clear up an opening here." And I'm going to start to do an incantation, here.

**Rev:** All right, roll Use Magic.

**Jake:** Seven.

**Rev:** All right. What's your glitch, and what's your effect?

**Jake:** So the effect I'm going for is do one thing beyond human limitations. And I want to basically Genji dash through those veins with the fire sword. Like see if I can just kind of dash up and cleft through all of them to create us an opening.

**Rev:** OK.

**Jake:** And I think my glitch is that the magic draws immediate, unwelcome attention.

**Rev:** So you leap into the air and dash forward towards these vines, and the flaming sword flicks out and cuts through them, leaving the burning ends of the vines on the tree. And from somewhere further up in the tree, you hear ...

**Rev:** BABA YAGA: Ah ... Who is here?

**Jake:** Yeah, I'm gonna hustle inside the tree.

**Rev:** Ori follows you very quickly inside the tree.

**Jake:** What does it look like?

**Rev:** Inside of the tree, you find that parts of it are rotted out. Right at the beginning. You can go straight ahead, left, or right. And there are just chunks of dead tree that have rotted away, leaving openings throughout.

**Jake:** I'm gonna think back to which direction we went in the tunnels in Russia, and go the same way. I think my inclination would just be maybe it's gonna be the same layout and hope for the best.

**Rev:** Yeah, I don't think that you have much difficulty recalling that. So when you go in, you remember back that the first place you would want to go would be straight.

**Jake:** Yeah, I'll go straight ahead.

**Rev:** So are you essentially just following the path that you had taken to get to the flowers before?

**Jake:** I think so. As long as it exists.

**Rev:** OK.

**Jake:** You know? Like if I reach a point that, like, oh, this is clearly different. This is a fork and it wasn't a fork before.

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** Then all bets are probably off.

**Rev:** OK. So you step inside and you move ahead. Not going left or right, but going straight. You go for about twenty feet and you feel that it's starting to slope down and you can see water ahead. But the path does continue forward further on.

**Jake:** Like across the water?

**Rev:** Correct.

**Jake:** I think I'm gonna do another incantation, then.

**Rev:** All right. Roll Use Magic.

**Jake:** Seven again.

**Rev:** All right. What is your effect and what is your glitch?

**Jake:** The effect is to do one thing beyond human limitations. I just want to be able to leap this body of water.

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** And the glitch is that it has a problematic side effect.

**Rev:** So you leap across this water and you land and you go to take another step. And when you go to take another step, you leap again. And so it seems like with every step, it is one giant [laughs] leap for mankind ...

**Jake:** [laughs]

**Rev:** That every time you try to take a normal step, it propels you very far. And as this magic engulfs you and you leap, you hear ...

**Rev:** BABA YAGA: Oh, tasty. Oh, magic from another place. Ah, I smell you ... [chuckles]

**Rev:** And it seems like it's echoing from inside of the tree.

**Jake:** I'm gonna keep trying to follow this path. Boundin'.

**Rev:** All right. So you come to a intersection where you can go straight ahead or turn left. And you remember that in Russia, you went straight ahead.

**Jake:** Then I shall do that.

**Rev:** As you start to move down this straight ahead path, you notice that there are these gaps inside of this rotting wood, and you can start to see vines moving through the gaps. Like they are not out in the hallway, but you can see them like moving and trailing along inside.

**Jake:** I mean, yeah. My thought would be to try and, like, bar this hallway to vines. Like if it seems like they could start creeping in. But I don't know if they would count. And so I don't know how I would try it in the fiction if like ...

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** I don't know if they count as a creature, you know?

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** So I guess I'll just keep moving with the fire sword out and ready. Like what I do know is that plants don't enjoy fire very much. So if they get squirrely, hopefully I can deal with them.

**Rev:** So you continue straight ahead, Ori following behind you. And the path starts to curve around, and you come to the option to go left or right. And you do remember that before you went to the right.

**Jake:** I do it again.

**Rev:** You turn to the right, and you can see that the tunnel here goes into the water entirely.

**Jake:** Oh, man! This was going all right. Well, I guess I'm going for a swim. "All right, Ori. Last time I fell in the water, that was when it triggered, like, the weird nightmare lady in the pond?"

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah.

**Jake:** You might want to hang back so you don't have to go in the water? But then you'll be alone. So I don't know, which would you prefer? Maybe trigger a nightmare and not be alone? Or not trigger a nightmare, but be alone?"

**Rev:** ORI: Uh ...

**Jake:** "I know. It's not appealing."

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah.

**Jake:** "Let me reiterate how thankful I am that you agreed to come on this journey with me."

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah, yeah, no problem. Uh, I don't know. Do you want me to, like, stay guard here? Do you want me to come with you?

**Jake:** "Oh. I drag you to me when I try to teleport. So never mind. You stay here for a second. Stay on guard. I'll make the swim and then I'll pull you along."

**Rev:** ORI: OK.

**Jake:** So I'll sheath the sword and go in.

**Rev:** All right. Jake, role Dark Delights and Violent Ends.

**Jake:** Nine.

**Rev:** Who is another uneasy ally you have?

**Jake:** Probably Yaga.

**Rev:** So as you are swimming underneath this water, trying to get into the cavern that you believe is there, you see a pair of eyes open up under the water, and this gleaming smile reflected in this blue and green light from these metallic teeth. And it's Yaga, and she is wrapped up inside of these vines under the water. And she points further ahead, and you can see that she tries to move with you, and these vines are pulling at her. And she turns and she starts to chew at them with her teeth, and this black blood starts coming out of the vines, filling the water, and it is impossible for you to see. What are you doing?

**Jake:** I'm going to try and focus and manifest my willpower to suppress this effect.

**Rev:** All right. Roll Force of Will. And can you remind us all what that does?

**Jake:** So when you apply your will to dispelling a magical effect, blocking a spell, or suspending a phenomenon, roll +Weird. On a hit, momentary magics are canceled completely and long lasting spells and effects are suspended temporarily. On a 10+, you can also spend a Luck to instantly snuff out a powerful spell or strange effect. On a 7 to 9, I'll take 1-harm as the strain of dismissing magic unravels me.

**Rev:** All right. Roll it.

**Jake:** [quietly] Please. Ten.



**Rev:** All right. So are you going to spend the Luck?

**Jake:** I don't think so.

**Rev:** What does it look like when this happens?

**Jake:** So I imagine that I, like, close my eyes and like, it's, you know, like I'm kind of straining. Like I'm focusing. My brow is furrowed. And have you ever seen the video of, like, the person who's looking out at their yard and it's completely covered in like some kind of plant fluff on top of the grass, and then they light it with a lighter and the flame just kind of gradually creeps over it and burns it all away?

**Rev:** Yeah.

**Jake:** I think that's what it looks like. I think whatever the magic is that's being dispelled? As I concentrate, like, I furrow my brow and then all of a sudden the end of it catches, and the fire spreads out across it and dispels it.

**Rev:** OK. So for someone who was in the water and able to see you in this moment — because right now you're in this complete darkness. But from the camera's point of view, it's almost like setting gasoline on fire on top of water. We see this thin layer of fire ripple out from you. And as it passes through the water, the water clears. The Yaga vanishes, as do the vines. And when you open your eyes, you are inside of not clear water, but not completely stagnant and dark water anymore. And you can see where you can go up just a little bit ahead of you.

**Jake:** Yeah, I'm gonna finish the swim.

**Rev:** OK. So you finish the swim and you come out into a small cave. And as you surface into this cavern and take a breath, the smell of decay here is very strong. And you can see that up ahead of you is a space that you can get onto that is still made from the roots of this tree. And there is just piles of almost like mulch and compost. Just decomposing natural matter.

**Jake:** Are there flowers?

**Rev:** You don't see any from inside the water.

**Jake:** Well, then I guess I'll climb out so I can get a better look at this room and see if I can spot a blue flower.

**Rev:** All right. Roll Investigate a Mystery.

**Jake:** Thirteen.

**Rev:** All right. You get a hold 2.

**Jake:** What is being concealed here?

**Rev:** On the pile of the compost are a number of different flowers. They are rotting away and withered. But you are able to see just little bits of bright color, like it's buried underneath the compost.

**Jake:** Do I see any blue?

**Rev:** You do.

**Jake:** I'm gonna try and push a little bit of this stuff aside to see if I can locate a blue flower.

**Rev:** You reach down and start moving this compost around, trying to find a flower. And you find pieces of wood and grass. There are pieces of wood and weapons. Just all of this old decaying wood and floral life. But you are able to spread it around and find a blue rose that is growing out of a area of moss.

**Jake:** I think I'll kind of scoop it up, roots and all if possible. Like scoop up the moss clump that it's growing out of, too. And I guess I won't like call Ori me because I need to head back that direction. So I guess I'll go back in the water and swim back.

**Rev:** I think that your cancellation of this magic is still in effect for the moment. You get into the water and swim back and come out. When you come out, Ori is standing there with his bow drawn, looking down the hallway from the direction you have both come.

**Jake:** "Is something coming?"

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah. Like I keep hearing that voice, man, and it's like tittering at me or something.

**Jake:** "All right, here. You take this." And I'll hand him the flower.

**Rev:** ORI: OK.

**Jake:** "And if anything happens, if we get in a scrap or anything, just turn to mist and go."

**Rev:** ORI: OK.

**Jake:** "I'll hold it off and I'll catch up with you."

**Rev:** ORI: OK.

**Jake:** And I'll draw the sword and start kind of advancing with him down this hallway.

**Rev:** And as you both start to move down this hallway, you can very clearly hear this loud clicking together. And now that you're closer to it, it almost sounds like stones knocking together.

**Rev:** BABA YAGA: Oh, what have you taken from me? Ah ... It has been long since I have feasted on flesh. So much plant life. So many people made from wood and pulp. Not nourishing. But you? Oh, I smell you both. Oh, it will be good to eat again.

**Jake:** "OK. How are you feeling? Calm?"

**Rev:** ORI: Oh, yeah. Real fucking calm, man.

**Jake:** "Yeah."

**Rev:** ORI: That thing said it wants to eat flesh. It hasn't had it in a long time.

**Jake:** "Yeah. OK. New plan."

**Rev:** ORI: Yeah?

**Jake:** "Do you want race to the tower again?"

**Rev:** ORI: Oh, god. How? Like are we gonna go ahead where she's at, or do we go a different direction?

**Jake:** Do I remember if there was another direction that looped back around?

**Rev:** Roll Sharp.

**Jake:** Six.

**Rev:** You know that there is a way around that would get you out again. But you really only distinctly remember the directions to the flower, because that was kind of what left a lasting impression on you.

**Jake:** "I mean, one of these other tunnels that branches off somehow loops back around towards the entrance. But I don't remember which one. But I mean maybe if we both just run at her real fast, one of us will get past her. Except she can kind of like turn into taffy and she might be like the whole size of this hallway."

**Rev:** ORI: Taffy?

**Jake:** "Yeah. It's fucking weird, dude. Fucking weird. She was draped all over the furniture with her metal teeth."

**Rev:** ORI: Why didn't you tell me this before we got here?

**Jake:** Well, I sort of handwaved that I would explain to you all of our interactions with Baba Yaga, so ...

**Rev:** ORI: Experiencing it now, it's much different.

**Jake:** [laughs]

**Rev:** ORI: An abstract versus a certainty, it's real different.

**Jake:** So if I try to teleport to a person, I bring them to me. But if I try to go to a place, I still go to the place, right?

**Rev:** Correct.

**Jake:** And I don't think we ever encountered me trying to bring a person to a place. Did we?

**Rev:** No, nuh-uh.

**Jake:** Well, I'm gonna give that a shot.

**Rev:** OK.

**Jake:** So I'm gonna grab Ori, and see if I can teleport back to the balcony of the castle.

**Rev:** As you grab a hold of him, he holds out the flower again.

**Rev:** ORI: Should I keep this? Do you want it?

**Jake:** "Yeah, I'll take it for now."

**Rev:** OK. Roll Angel Wings.

**Jake:** Fourteen.

**Rev:** Where are you teleporting to?

**Jake:** The parapet.

**Rev:** You appear on the parapet, holding the blue rose, all alone.

Tass, you are in the helicopter with Everett, headed towards the North Pole, and you're about fifteen minutes out. Is there anything in particular you want to do on the way there?

**Tass:** I think I'm just acquainting myself with all the gear and kind of going over how it works, how it fits, all of that.

**Rev:** He lands the helicopter and shuts everything down.

**Rev:** EVERETT: So it's gonna be a mite difficult. It's, uh ... It's a whole different thing, trying to go deep and go cold. Uh, it's not something I've ever enjoyed, the few times I've had to do it. Uh, but I'll make sure everything up here keeps running. You feel pretty comfortable with this stuff?

**Tass:** "As comfortable as I'm going to get, but I am confident."

**Rev:** EVERETT: All right.

**Rev:** So Everett starts to unload this atmospheric diving suit, and explains to you how it works.

**Rev:** EVERETT: This will make it so you can go up to two thousand feet without having to stop to decompress or anything like that. I don't want you getting the bends or anything.

**Tass:** "That's super cool. I look like yellow Baymax in this."

**Rev:** EVERETT: Ayuh. And it's gonna kind of restrict what you can do because your hands, you feel around in there, operate those clamps on the outside, and those are gonna act as your hands.

**Tass:** "Right. Yes. OK. So, clamps. That works because I really just need the one blade that was loose, and hopefully that pack is still down there with the other two in it. So that should be perfect."

**Rev:** And he goes over to Mother Hen, and he pulls the cable for the winch off and attaches it to the back of the suit. He spends a couple of minutes helping you get inside of it, turning on all of the lights, get everything powered on.

**Rev:** EVERETT: Gosh, I'm not sure how to signal for when you're ready to have me pull you up.

**Tass:** "Oh, I think ... I think, first of all, if like a full hour goes by? Just go ahead and reel me up, just in case something went bad or whatever. But otherwise, once I get down and grab the things, I'll just wrap my arm around the cord and give it a quick three pulls in succession."

**Rev:** EVERETT: Yeah, all right.

**Tass:** "OK. This is ... This is suddenly kind of terrifying."

**Rev:** EVERETT: Oh, yeah? Why is that?

**Tass:** "I don't know. It's just dark and cold and deep, and like ... I don't know. I'm so used to monsters that people don't know exist, and now I'm going to go down here and might like see an orca or some shit. Like this is kinda scary."

**Rev:** EVERETT: Fair.

**Tass:** "All right. Ready to go."

**Rev:** And he walks you over to the edge and helps lower you down into the water. As you break the surface of the water and start to go down, all of the lights kick on. And it's very dark and you can feel the cold, even through the plastic of this suit. It's not enough to affect you, but you can tell how cold this water is. What are you doing as you are being lowered down?

**Tass:** I think I'm just scanning as much as I can in just the darkness of the water with the lights I have. I want to keep an eye out.

**Rev:** Roll Read a Bad Situation.

**Tass:** Oh, no. Nine.

**Rev:** You get a hold 1.

**Tass:** Are there any dangers I haven't noticed?

**Rev:** As you start to lower down 10, 15 more feet, your eyes are drawn over, up and above you, to the right, as the light from your shoulder glints off of something. And you turn and you look in that direction and you can see that underneath the ice that Everett has parked on, this long, eerily thin humanoid figure has phased out of the ice. It has black eyes, and wherever it swims, small crystals of ice spiderweb out from it. And it seems to be drawn towards your lights, because it's slowly gliding in your direction.

**SFX:** OUTRO MUSIC

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